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THE
TRIUMPH
OF
TRUTH AND GOOD SENSE;
OR,
AN EXPOSÉ
OF
QUACKS AND QUACKERY.

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The world is nat'rally adverse
To all the truth it sees or hears;
But swallows nonsense and a lie,
With greediness and gluttony;
And though it have the pique, and long,
'Tis still for something in the wrong.
HUDIBRAS.

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—
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that—If a man's words are misrepresented, the consciousness of his good intentions makes him despise the petty observations of ignorance and malice. It is very common to assume a dictatorial and decisive tone, when we wish to adopt an opinion which is not corroborated by accurate observation ; often we neglect the things under our noses, and, regardless of what is within our reach, pursue what is remote and extraordinary. Men readily believe what they wish to be true ; the facility of abounding more or less in happy thoughts, specious reasonings, and ingenious explanations, makes them neglect to investigate the real causes of things. The authority of great names makes us often swear to their dogmas ; and the natural propensity of men, rather to believe than to disturb their brains by thinking, has often been the fruitful mother of error, and the means of checking the progress of reason, and the advancement of natural truth. In this way the most indifferent medicines have been asserted to possess the most miraculous properties. Based upon such authority, quack or patent medicines have got into repute, and it will require more than Herculean labour to cut the monstrous heads off this Hydra. Doctor Goldsmith, in speaking of quacks, makes the following beautiful remarks :

“ Whatever may be the merits of the English in other sciences, they seem particularly excellent in the art of healing. There is scarcely a disorder incident to humanity, against which they are not possessed with a most infallible antidote. The professors of other arts confess the inevitable intricacy of things ; talk with doubt, and

decide with hesitation ; but doubting is entirely unknown in medicine ; the advertising professors here delight in cases of difficulty : be the disorder never so desperate or radical, you will find numbers in every street, who, by levelling a pill at the part affected, promise a certain cure without loss of time, knowledge of a bedfellow, or hinderance of business.

“ When I consider the assiduity of this profession, their benevolence amazes me. They not only in general give their medicines for half value, but use the most persuasive remonstrances to induce the sick to come and be cured. Sure, there must be something strangely obstinate in an English patient, who refuses so much health upon such easy terms : does he take a pride in being bloated with a dropsy ? does he find a pleasure in the alternations of an intermittent fever ? or feel as much satisfaction in nursing up his gout, as he found pleasure in acquiring it ? He must, otherwise he would never reject such repeated assurances of instant relief. What can be more convincing than the manner in which the sick are invited to be well ? The doctor first begs the most earnest attention of the public to what he is going to propose ; he solemnly affirms the pill was never found to want success ; he produces a list of those who have been rescued from the grave by taking it : yet, notwithstanding all this, there are many here who now and then think proper to be sick. Only sick, did I say ? There are some who even think proper to die ; though they might have purchased the health-restoring specific for half-a-crown at every corner.

“ I am amazed that these doctors, who know what an obstinate set of people they have to deal with, have never thought of attempting to revive the dead. When the living are found to reject their prescriptions, they ought in conscience to apply to the dead, from whom they can expect no such mortifying repulses ; they would find in the dead the most complying patients imaginable : and what gratitude might they not expect from the patient’s son, now no longer an heir, and his wife, now no longer a widow. Think not that there is any thing chimerical in such an attempt ; they already perform cures equally strange. What can be more truly astonishing, than to see old age restored to youth, and vigour to the most feeble constitutions ; yet this is performed here every day : a simple electuary effects these wonders, even without the bungling ceremonies of having the patient boiled up in a kettle, or ground down in a mill. The physicians here (quacks) go through the ordinary courses of education, but receive all their knowledge of medicine by immediate inspiration from heaven. Some are thus inspired even in the womb, and what is very remarkable, understand their profession as well at three years old as at threescore. Others have spent a great part of their lives unconscious of any latent excellence, till a bankruptcy, or a residence in jail, have called their miraculous powers into exertion. And others still there are, indebted to their superlative ignorance alone for success ; the more ignorant the practitioner, the less capable is he thought of deceiving. The people here judge as they do in the east, where it is thought absolutely requisite that a man should be an

idiot before he pretends to be either a conjuror or a doctor. When a physician, by inspiration, is sent for, he never perplexes the patient by previous examination; he asks very few questions, and those only for form sake; he knows every disorder by intuition, he administers the pill or drop for every distemper, nor is more inquisitive than the farrier while he drenches a horse. If the patient lives, then has he one more to add to the surviving list; if he dies, then it may justly be said of the patient's disorder, that, as it was not cured, the disorder was incurable."

Notwithstanding the impudent quack deceives unblushingly the public, and degrades by his odious actions the profession, whose titles and claims he fraudulently has usurped, it will be ever a heartfelt satisfaction to the honest and ingenuous mind of the well informed physician and surgeon (whose number is not limited to a few), in this town, to know that men of sense at all times will duly appreciate his talents. They know that it is not an easy task, to devote our whole life for the welfare of our fellow-creatures, to breathe a polluted air in those receptacles of human infirmities, where the living appear often more hideous than the dead, where the immediate contact of the sufferers proves often fatal; they know that the intrinsic merit and talents of the skilful practitioner can neither be enhanced, nor depreciated, by the praises and approbation of a few highly-scented ladies, who fancy they can establish the reputation of their physician, even as that of their hair-dresser and milliner. The truly wise man, says Biot, is he who consecrates his life to the study

of nature, his happiness and domineering passion is concentrated in this: the pleasure of making discoveries occupies him more than the care to prove them; he values above all things the judgment and approbation of those learned men, who have given proof of talent and genius in similar pursuits. He wants judges still more than admirers; anxious to enrich himself by the discoveries of others he ponders them with justice and interest, gives them exactly the degree of certitude they ought to possess; and always ready to accept truth, to reject errors, he maintains his mind constantly in this enlightened and philosophical doubt, which, according to Bacon and Descartes, constitutes the principle of true science. The quack, on the contrary, wants external show: instead of addressing himself to competent judges, he refuses to submit to their judgment, accuses them often of exaggerated severity, nay, even of envy, and injustice. He appeals to the multitude; the public papers establish the ephemeral theatre of his fame, praise his pretended discoveries, and afford him opportunities to boast and vent them out with impunity.

The existence of quacks, dates from time immemorial, and seems, unfortunately, to be an evil inherent in human nature. Wherever there are medical men, we are sure to find quacks; thus we see in the same country, growing promiscuously, the most salutiferous herbs, and the most dangerous poisons. Few persons visit a patient, and hear his complaint, without proposing a remedy; this remedy is invariably proclaimed as infallible, and as having been tried

under similar circumstances ; the conviction of the efficacy of the proposed medicine undoubtedly originates from noble motives, but few persons perceive that they often praise or condemn things of which they are utterly ignorant. Gonelle, the jester of the Marquis of Ferrara, being asked what sort of business was most general among men, pronounced it to be quackery, and laid a wager to that effect: pretending one day to suffer severely from toothache, and having his face wrapt up, he appeared at court, and put down in his tablets several hundred names of those who had given him advice, and among the rest the Marquis himself, because he had said, I know a remedy that will do you good, take such or such a thing, and you will be cured. It is remarkable, says Dr. Gregory, that of the fruit of medical knowledge it is very easy to get a mouthful, and very difficult to get a bellyful, it being in such general request; and still more remarkable, that the smallest portion of it, so small a portion as to elude all observation, often produces more violent effects than the largest quantity of it that any person has hitherto been able to procure for himself. In some constitutions, the effects of a small mouthful of that unlucky fruit are much more alarming than those of deadly nightshade, or the strongest Scotch Whiskey. John Atkins, an old navy surgeon, observes, that our inability, upon all occasions, to appreciate the efforts of nature in the cure of diseases, must always render our notions with respect to the powers of art, liable to numerous errors and multiplied deceptions. Nothing is more natural, and, at the same time, more erroneous than to attribute the cure of a disease to

the last medicine that had been employed. The advocates of amulets and charms have ever been thus enabled to appeal to the testimony of what they are pleased to call experience, in justification of their superstitions ; and cases which, in truth, ought to have been considered lucky escapes, have been triumphantly puffed off as skilful cures. Quacks, according to their boldness and way of addressing, (velvet and infallibility particularly) command success by striking the fancies of an audience. If a few, more sensible than the rest, are not easily gulled at first sight, when they see a man is never ashamed, in time pimp in to his assistance.

In 1782 a temple of health was erected in London, by an individual named Graham, containing a celestial bed, standing on glass legs, and decorated with the richest hangings ; he asserted that married people, deprived of the blessings of children, might have heirs by sleeping in this bed, for which he demanded modestly £100 per night ; and it is stated, that several persons of fashion have come to these terms. He moreover possessed, like the famous Paracelsus Bombastus, an elixir of life, which could prolong the existence of the individual as long as he pleased, wherefore he only asked the paltry sum of £1000, and more than one wealthy Croesus is said to have paid this extravagant price to be cured of folly. That people could be cured at more moderate terms the following anecdote will show :—William Clowes, a distinguished surgeon, tells us that in his time, an old woman promised to cure all diseases by a charm, for a penny and a penny

loaf of bread : being imprisoned for witchcraft, the magistrates promised to discharge her if she would reveal the nature of her charm, which she relates consisted in pronouncing the following verses :—

My loaf in my lap,
My penny in my purse,
Thou art never the better
Nor am I never the worse.

A blessing it would have been for man, if quackery had always been so simple. But the more incredible the promises held out to the public are, the more certain has been their success. We should compare quacks, to a blind man with a stick ; if in the struggle which takes place between the medicine and the disease, the malady is touched fortuitously, a cure happens ; but if the patient is touched, death will be the inevitable result. Strange thing ! The public notices this accidental success, and forgets, that for one who is cured, hundreds often are killed. Would not every one without hesitation sneer at the impudence of a quack, who promises to restore the sight of a man, whose eyes had been torn out ? Well then ! the case is exactly the same in a great many circumstances ; an organ, essential to life, is destroyed, or its tissue is altered, inasmuch that it is unfit to perform its functions ; the mischief therefore undoubtedly surpasses the most skilful combination of a physician, because it is utterly impossible to create new organs. This ought to be particularly remembered in many instances of pulmonary consumption, and almost all organic diseases, the tissue of the organ itself being affected.

Illness and health are viewed in the abstract, notwithstanding they are only varieties of existence, these states of feeling being linked together by a non-interrupted chain, obeying the same laws, and being the consequence of the same principle of action. To the vulgar eye, the various functions of the human frame and its infirmities, seem a sea agitated by the billows of a universal tempest, or the theatre of a general battle, where all the elements are in perpetual struggle with each other; but the penetrating eyes of a sagacious observer, discover in this chaos, in this apparent confusion, calm order and harmony; his treatment is founded on experience and knowledge, guided by a sound judgment, which recognizes and compares the powers of the animal economy with the violence of the disease, leaving nothing to chance, which can be managed by skill, knowing the various resources of nature, considering the patient in his interior and exterior relations, his age, temperament, sex, climate, season of the year, fixing what will suit best every individual, without adopting general rules sanctioned by custom, but contradicted by daily experience. Let us not, however, think this an easy matter, it requires a deep examination of the multifarious and minute modifications of the disease during its course, progress, and amendment; a calculation of all the chances of probability; tracing, in an accurate manner, the most convenient mode, according to the various positions in which the patient happens to be. After all this we may occasionally not succeed, but it will be gratifying to an honest, noble mind, having done all for the best. When the life of an individual is at stake,

a sacred duty devolves upon us to use all the circumspection, wisdom, and talents, with which we are endowed. Would we trust the welfare of a beloved wife, a tender mother, or a dutiful child, in the hands of quacks, whose mercenary and coarse feelings can value only the glittering of money? Their cold hearts cannot appreciate a noble action, nor possess true sentiments of humanity; they live upon your credulity, and well might I exclaim with the wise Solomon, ch. xxiii. v. 3, “Be not desirous of his dainties, for they are deceitful meat.”

I will shortly notice another set of men called bone-setters, who, without the slightest knowledge of anatomy, or of the human frame, acquire a surreptitious reputation for treating the various luxations of bones, pretending to possess a family secret, or to have received this gift by inspiration. The ignorant and credulous, always fond of the marvellous, and even the more enlightened part of the public, expose themselves to the coarse hand of bone-setters, who change often a sprain or a slight contusion into a real luxation or a fracture, applying to the evil which they themselves have produced, tight bandages, which impede the circulation, and deprive the limb of life. In this way I saw a young man, labouring under a spinal complaint, consult a fellow of this tribe, and return with a real dislocation of one of the vertebræ of the spinal column, which was followed by the most excruciating agonies, and at last, the death of the unhappy sufferer. The talents of those men are well pointed out by Martel, an eminent surgeon of one of the kings of France, who,

notwithstanding, he had cured the King of an alarming disease, was superseded by a celebrated bone-setter, but put his boasted talents to a too rigid test. An officer having broken his leg, the individual alluded to was called for, and Martel only allowed to be present at the operation; he however, had previously persuaded the patient to keep the broken leg in his bed, and to show the sound one to the bone-setter, who after having touched and moved it in every direction, declared, ostentatiously, that the fracture was extensive, and applied a most complicated bandage to it; the fellow, as may easily be imagined, was dismissed, and Martel enjoyed the rare satisfaction of convincing the bystanders of the propriety of always applying to talented, honest, and well informed surgeons.

Another class of men make mystic signs over the fracture, utter unintelligible words, assuring the patient that he will be cured in a few days: the surgeon is called too late to attempt the reduction, and the patient remains a cripple for life. Many hundred cases of this species of quackery are on record, which ought to be extinguished for ever, and true magistrates ought to punish this unlawful and horrible practice.

When those who possess a perfect knowledge of the organization of the human frame, meditate on the truly terrific quantity of noxious agents which surround us, and threaten from all sides our existence, they only wonder that the number of our diseases is not greater than it really is. All within us, all that surrounds us, is

susceptible of becoming a cause of illness; life itself is only a perpetual struggle against destruction. This great and mournful picture of the infirmities to which human nature is subject, therefore would certainly more deeply affect the feeling heart, were it not, on the other hand, for the immense resources which the medical art possesses. By the unerring wisdom of the Almighty, all the kingdoms of nature, all the countries of the world, their various products and industry, concur to furnish remedies against the various diseases, and offer means to prevent them. Is every thing not a remedy in the hands of him whose penetrating eye discerns the immense variety of means with which nature has entrusted him, and little would he deserve the name of a minister of nature, whose only skill consisted in the knowledge of simples, and the sterile task of writing prescriptions; forgetful in the meantime, that notwithstanding the innumerable resources of nature, and the useful informations gathered from all quarters of the world, medical science has its limits, and that of all evils to which “flesh is heir,” some are incurable, and have become so identified with the constitution that the curative means resorted to are often worse than the malady: in short, that it is dangerous to cure some diseases, the removal of which nature cannot endure, and consequently are productive of inevitable death. Enlightened and rational experience can only determine whether remedies are requisite, useful, or noxious, and knows with precision the diseases which it is dangerous to cure. Guided by wise and unerring indications, the most dangerous poisons, as arsenic, opium, prussic acid, mercury, fox-glove,

belladonna, &c., become, in its hands, the most active and efficacious remedies, but very dangerous ones, with those who are unacquainted with their qualities. The ignorant, always self-confident, and incapable of reflection, fear little to disturb the functions of organs, whose laws are unknown to him ; he tries, by active remedies, to mitigate the most harassing symptoms, and acquires an ephemeral reputation. Periodical evacuations, ancient sores, cutaneous eruptions, &c., are cured as it were by magic. But, how often after this sudden cure and temporary relief, see we not arise a series of symptoms and accidents, a thousand times worse than the original comparatively slight malady. It is not therefore the use, much less the abuse of medicines, which constitutes medical skill ; no more do colours and pencils make the talent of the painter ; but the judicious and the accurate prescription of them, forms the basis of medical science. An exact knowledge of the disease, the power of remedies, and their action upon the human frame, can only promise a happy result. Would not every one who wanted to have his watch repaired, go to an artist who is well acquainted with its construction ? Yes, to be sure, you will say. Well then ! is it not absurd to trust the most complicated, the most delicate machine, in the hands of persons who have not the slightest notion of its structure and organization, of the multifarious causes by which it is put in motion, and of the means and instruments which can restore it ? The means employed among the ignorant, in all nations and ages, have been panaceas or universal remedies : the word indicates, at once, their value. It is well known

that diseases are only deviations from the healthy state; these morbid affections, being first local, become consecutively general; a state of nervous irritation engenders feelings which are various in their essence, and acquire various tints in the different organs, according to their nature, their part of action, and the various degrees of susceptibility. Consequently, the same morbid affection assumes different types.

An universal remedy ought to cure all diseases, and under all circumstances, whatever may be the organs primitively or consecutively affected. We must, therefore, says Virey, imagine all the human bodies to be in perfect æquilibrium, only susceptible of perfect health and one general disease. Such complexions, similar to each other, in their form and movements, must maintain themselves between all extremes; those beings constantly indifferent, must be neither too quick nor too slow; wake and sleep in perfect unison; eat and drink neither too much, nor too little; exempt from excess, as well as defect; they must feel pleasure and pain without excess; all their organs and functions must be as regular as the movements of a watch, pointing the hours. But we easily perceive that this imaginary state of health and perfection, amidst the general inconstancy of the surrounding agents, is not an attribute of the human constitution. We are old or young, male or female, weak or strong, active or slow; in one word, every one possesses a peculiar health, and is subject to particular diseases. Some of our organs claim superiority above the others, either

immediately on being born, or acquire it from our mode of living, the natural revolution of age or seasons, or from the quality of food, climes, and elements, which surround us. Let us now analyse what a specific or universal remedy is.

A specific remedy for a disease must cure the disease at all times, whatever may be the age or sex, and under all circumstances. Is it not insulting even common understanding, to adopt a perfect similarity of symptoms, and accurate identity of temper, in every individual who is fool enough to take it? It is a notorious fact, that one and the same specific disease originates from various causes. So intimately, says Fernel, are causes connected with diseases, that these cannot disappear as long as the others exist. I appeal, says Tissot, to every man of sense, who will be for a moment at the trouble to reflect on the different causes of disease, on the opposition of these causes, and on the absurdity of wishing to cure them all by the same remedy. After having imbibed this principle, people will be no more deceived by those tissues of sophisms, tending to prove that all maladies originate from one and the same cause, and ought to be cured by the advertised remedy; headache, for example, may proceed from a bad stomach, a common cold, nervous debility, gout, rheumatism, &c. This clearly proves that headache cannot be cured by the same remedy : moreover, different persons possess different constitutions, proper or contracted habits, so that it is utterly impossible for the same empirical nostrum to create similar effects, under

multifarious circumstances and various times. An editor of a certain review makes the following remarks. “ With respect to the gout, that genteel complaint, we have a few words to say :—It is certainly a happy thing in this enlightened age ; you no sooner allow that you have some complaint, than a thousand volunteer physicians start up, all mentioning things that are certain cures ; these even in common complaints ; but in the gout, that difficult subject, there are, it appears, a variety of remedies, though, perhaps not supplied by the faculty. A relation of mine happens, very unluckily for him, to have been afflicted by this tormenting disease for some years, and the following gratuitous prescriptions for the cure have been generously, but literally awarded, in such ways as the following :—How’s the gout ? Very bad ! What do you take ? Reynold’s Specific. That’s a bad thing ; it has killed several of my acquaintance ; you should leave it off, otherwise you will soon die. Wilson’s Tincture is very good. Wilson’s Tincture is the Eau Medicinale ! That has killed thousands. Wilson’s Tincture has killed one of my brothers ; do not take that stuff—You should take the carbonated soda—You should take sulphur, magnesia and gin—There is nothing so good as Reynold’s Specific—You should take more care of yourself—You should always keep your body open—You should refrain from all vegetables—You should abstain from all kinds of animal food ; from vinegar, mustard, pepper, malt liquor, wine, and spirits—You should live upon vegetables, and eat no meat—Keep yourself warm with flannels—You should not wrap up for the gout—Drink plenty of good strong

rum and water—Drink plenty of good brandy—You should drink plenty of Madeira—You should take buck-bean tea—You should go to Dr. Hogan—I put cabbage leaves to the affected parts—Apply leeches, and then a poultice—Never apply leeches nor poultices—Always let gout have its own course—You should use a flesh-brush—You should never touch the parts affected—You should never sleep when the pain is severe—You must not take too much exercise when confined to your bed—You should bandage up your legs with a great many yards of calico, to keep your parts from swelling—You should on no account keep the gout bound or confined—You should wear a flannel dress next your skin—You should not make too free with flannels, because you cannot with safety leave them off—You should take the warm bath—You should never take the warm bath unless you wish to bring on the gout—You should always wear a magnet in your waistcoat—You should wear several yards of list round your body—You should bathe your feet in salt, or saltpetre water, every day—You should often loose blood—Bleeding is death for the disease—You should steam the part over a pan of hot water—Madeira and gooseberry wine will bring on the disease—Take plenty of sulphur in your tea every morning—Be sure always to keep your feet dry—You should take the wine of colchicum; the root of meadow saffron steeped in water a few days, strained off and mixed with wine is all the go. Oh ! I say, have you heard what the King said at Brighton ? He said to one with the gout, you should go to my friend Wilson ; now you will have a royal dose ; a fine thing for Wilson.

Hopkin's, of Richmond, does wonders for the gout ; why don't you send for some of his medicine ? You should take what they call the Chelsea Pensioner ; he sold the receipt for £100. Mix some treacle, sulphur, magnesia, ginger, and guaiacum—You should take as much exercise as possible—If you take too much exercise you will bring on the gout—Why don't you go to Bath ?—Cheltenham is the best place for gouty subjects—Eat plenty of cucumbers and onions—Cucumbers are too cold and dangerous for gouty habits—The white of a new-laid egg, beat up in a little warm water, taken fasting every morning—Eat two hard biscuits every morning, and drink hot water only—Use plenty of ether both outwardly and inwardly—Use half an ounce of ether when the gout is in the stomach—Apply castor oil to the parts affected—Rub in some oil of cabbage—Rub in the oil of swallows—Rub in vinegar—Rub in spermaceti—Rub in hogs'-lard and vitriol—Rub in the devil, or any thing you can catch hold of to give you ease," &c.

After this long enumeration of gratuitous and specific remedies, I do not, for a moment, hesitate to exclaim with the immortal Genevian philosopher, that it must be out of pure malice that men are ill, while all other complaints fare nearly in the same way as the gout. Let us not, however, fancy that the stock is already exhausted ; I forgot to mention, that among quack medicines, the different parts of the ass have been highly extolled, and employed as a remedy for all imaginable complaints. If the Greeks themselves, in a time that voluptuousness and sensuality

formed one of the most prominent features of that highly enlightened people, condescended to take internally the fæces of this animal as medicine, is it then to be wondered that other remedies, less disgusting, have had their turn as long as fashion kept up their credit? The Chinese prescribe in diseases of the chest, a preparation of the skin of the black ass, which, after crossing the large walls, became very popular, not on account of the marvellous cures it produced, but because it was rare and costly. If such encomiums have been bestowed upon the ass, it would ill become us to depreciate its merits, provided the beast remains in the limits prescribed by nature, and does not become a physician ; we will not dispute the taste of them by whom it is patronised.

I hope to have now sufficiently proved that the immense variety of empirical nostrums, proposed and credited against specific diseases, is the most positive criterion of their inefficacy, and that it is a disgrace to any country, that a stamp duty should be put upon patent medicines. In almost every street, we have for sale, Evan's Poor Man's Cough Drops, Wessel's Jesuit Drops, Allen and Bell's Antibilious Pills, Vint's Antibilious Tonic Pill, Widow Welch's Pills for Female Complaints, Boerhaave's Red Pills, Congreve's Petroleum Pills, Morison's Celebrated Pills, and a thousand more, too tedious to enumerate. My heart grieves to relate the mass of sufferings and untimely deaths produced by the practice of taking these secret medicines. Bread of deceit, says the wise Solomon, is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth

shall be filled with gravel. This sentence I hope that every one may remember, who values his life. I will not deny that some family prescriptions, and popular remedies, may occasionally have proved beneficial, but the chief danger consists in their being taken without a positive indication in view. When we consider the number of persons who are in the habit of taking these drugs, it is more than probable that some must be cured ; but it happens also, says Tissot, in his advice to the people, that a sword plunged in the chest pierces an abscess, and saves the individual whom this malady would have killed ; however, generally speaking, such deep wounds inflicted by a sword prove fatal. Triller relates of a quack, who had his pocket filled with recipes of all kinds ; when consulted, he ordered the patients to draw one forth by chance, promising that the lot they drew undoubtedly would cure their complaint. A lady, suffering under excruciating pains of the chest, consulted this new Esculapius, and putting her hand in the miraculous pocket, drew a prescription for a clyster ; upon which she was seized with so vehement a fit of laughter, that an abscess in her lungs broke, and she fortunately recovered. Accidental success, therefore, compensates not the multifarious dangers arising from the blind and incautious administration of empirical nostrums. Another not less dangerous practice among persons of all classes, consists either in bleeding, vomits, or some kind of purgatives, though it often puzzles physicians in what cases they may be resorted to with safety. I recollect several instances of persons, who were as downright killed by emetics, as they would have been by

daggers. Hundreds have met with an untimely grave by the injudicious use of bleeding and purgatives ; because nature cannot endure the violence done to her ; and still people, heedless of the numerous fatal instances, use, indiscriminately, those means, which the physician only ventures to make use of with the greatest caution. Suppose, for a moment, that a person, who has never played upon a violin, takes a fancy to elicit harmonious tones from this instrument, would not every one consider this attempt a folly ? and would the person alluded to not produce sounds, not only repulsive to the ear, but disharmonize the instrument ? Well, then ! does it never occur to you that you are in the same predicament as this fiddler ? utterly ignorant of the functions and laws of your body, the most beautiful and most complicated machine. You spoil this instrument, inasmuch, that the cleverest artist often cannot restore its tone. In a moral point of view, man ought to preserve his life and health, and not cast it away by using medicines which often undermine the constitution, and act as slow poison. Life is a gift of the Almighty God, and not of some common hand. Is it not, therefore, bidding defiance to all rules of wisdom, to shorten, or even endanger your life, and also to commit suicide ? It does not excuse you, that some respectable person has been cured, by such or such a remedy, because it depends upon the nature of the malady, and the temper of the sufferer, if you may be killed or cured. What difference is there to shoot, drown, or poison yourself, by some persons advice, or to do it by your own ; besides, your life is not your own, it may

belong to your wife, children, friends, and society at large. If you reject the advice of men who have devoted their life to medical studies, you will be deprived of the greatest of all human blessings—health !

Since the foregoing pages were written, the interesting trial at York, suggested the following addition :

As long as quackery was, if not sanctioned, at least tolerated, by government, little or no hope existed that the public would be protected from the dreadful consequences arising from the injudicious practice of trusting to the nefarious means, and unblushing falsehoods, daily put forth by the ignorant and inspired quacks, who live by the number of their dupes, and have thrived too long through the inconceivable apathy of government, and the accursed thirst of gold. Innumerable instances are on record of the deleterious effects produced by quack medicines ; but the poor sufferers, after having destroyed their health for ever, are unwilling to expose themselves, or to give a salutary warning to the public, being retained by that innate feeling of shame and self-importance, which leads us to conceal that we have been the unhappy victim of ignorance and fraud ; and although death, with all its woes, has been the consequence of their credulity, there is commonly a reluctance on the part of friends to resort to legal proceedings ; and unless, in a very striking case, like that which I am about to relate, the matter is generally buried in oblivion. Immortal honor and credit, for the sake of humanity, are due to Lord Lyndhurst, for having

convinced the world that the cherished and favorite Morison's pills, instead of simple, innocuous vegetable matter, contain the most active substances, which are deadly poisons, if not administered with a judicious discrimination. The numerous victims who have breathed their last by indulging in their favorite predilections for the Morisons, are over well known to regularly educated medical men; but it is time; also, that the public should take a salutary warning from doleful experience: the murder of Miss Cashin by St. John Long, and so many other manslaughters being almost obsolete and forgotten. The gentle admonition recently given at York, I hope, will not be unwelcome to the strenuous patronisers of quackery; and if a short abstract, contained in the Medical Gazette, does not produce quackphobia, it will, at least, like mathematics, strengthen and refresh the memory, because precepts may lead, but examples draw.

George Webb, a dealer in Morison's pills, was put to the bar, charged with the manslaughter of Richard Robinson, to whom he had administered large doses of gamboge, aloes, colocynth, and other drugs. The deceased was but twenty years of age, and an apprentice to a linen-draper. He was seized with an illness, which proved to be the small-pox, and the prisoner undertook the treatment of him, by administering quantities of Morison's pills, of which he gave, in the course of the illness, as doses, so much as ten, fifteen, and twenty pills, at several times in one day. The first dose he gave the patient is said to

have been twenty of the pills. There were, of course, very copious evacuations immediately ; still the pills—the pills, continued to be thrown in, the prisoner insisting that the patient was doing well, until it being evident to the bystanders that the contrary was the fact ; medical aid was sent for when it was too late, only a couple of hours before the death of the patient. This was on Friday, the 27th of June last, on the eighth or ninth day of the eruption of the small-pox. An inquest was held on the 28th, when a verdict of manslaughter was returned. The only defence the prisoner had to make on the occasion was, that his treatment had been interfered with ; he affected to attribute the death of the deceased to the opening of a window on the last day of the illness, to ventilate the small close apartment of the patient.

Mr. West, chemist, of Leeds, was examined at the trial. He had carefully analysed two kinds of Morison's pills, marked No. 1 and No. 2, the remnants of those which had been administered to the patient. The former he found to consist of aloes and colocynth, one grain ; gamboge, half a grain ; and cream of tartar, three quarters of a grain ; together with a little ginger in each pill. No. 2 pills were of three grains each, consisting of aloes and colocynth, one grain ; gamboge, a grain and a half ; and cream of tartar, half a grain ; and ginger as before. Mr. West was cross-examined at considerable length by the prisoner's counsel, but nothing was elicited to shake his testimony.

The other professional witnesses were two surgeons and two physicians. Mr. James Allen, of York, surgeon, was called into the deceased on Friday the 27th, two hours before his death. The patient was labouring under confluent small-pox. The body was examined by witness in presence of Drs. Wake and Balcombe, Mr. Matterson, and others. They found the stomach and bowels much inflamed, the former approaching to gangrene at the cardiac portion. Mr. Allen considered that death had been caused by small-pox, aggravated by the use of drastic purgatives. These were decidedly improper; greatly lessening the powers of life, which were already much reduced by the disease. Opening the window had done no injury. Inflammation of the stomach rarely happened in small-pox.

Mr. Matterson, surgeon, deposed that there had been several cases of small-pox at York lately: but none of those that occurred after vaccination, save in the patient's case, proved fatal. Death was here accelerated by the pills.

The evidence of Dr. Walcome went to shew that the probable cause of death in this case was the small-pox, which was aggravated by the pills.

Dr. Baldwin Wake said that from the appearances which he observed in the body, if he had not known that the patient had had small-pox, he should have

attributed his death to inflammation of the stomach alone. The stomach appeared to have been acted upon by a virulent poison. Gamboge was extremely likely to produce such effects. He had cautioned, at different times, some of his patients against the use of Morison's pills, as he was aware they contained gamboge.

The mother of the deceased added that her son had been vaccinated when about a year old.

This closed the case for the prosecution ; when the counsel for the prisoner attempted to argue that there was no case to go to the jury, as there was no evidence to show that there had been any malice on the part of the prisoner, but on the contrary, that his conduct had been humane, and his treatment well-intentioned. The Lord Chief Baron (Lyndhurst), however, was of a different opinion ; he thought it was for the jury to decide whether there had been manslaughter in the case or not. Several witnesses were then called on behalf of the prisoner, to speak to character, and to testify to the virtues of the pills. The son of Morison, and one partner in the firm (Moat,) were examined, and confessed that gamboge did enter into the composition of the pills. His Lordship summed up, and the jury, after retiring for a short time, brought in a verdict of guilty ; and six months' imprisonment is the mitigated sentence since pronounced by his Lordship, for Webb was strongly recommended to mercy by the jury.

That a compound of violent purgatives should be considered a panacea for all diseases, might seem the ne plus ultra of human folly, did we not observe that the public credit them whose tongues speak wonders, and swallow with the utmost voracity the pills and lies propagated by the newspapers. But as lying is the vice of a slave, and truth the attribute of a free and liberal spirit, it behoves us candidly to state that the component parts of Morison's pills are very imperfectly mixed, probably from large quantities being prepared at a time, and the mass not trituated with sufficient care. We have repeatedly known cases where half a dozen pills have produced no effect; and yet, on taking one or two more, most violent and almost uncontrollable purging had resulted; a circumstance easily accounted for by supposing the first dose to have contained little more than cream of tartar and ginger, and the second to have been nearly undiluted gamboge. This valuable hint, taken from the Medical Gazette, perfectly coincides with my experience, and that of other respectable members of the profession in this town, and may account for some apparent discrepancies as to analysis.